Dear P.

Thought this would be of passing interest. Your letter to the Wash. Post was excellent, as always. Nothing new here. Much love, M.

P.S. Marine Corp. acquittal very important, in est capas

THE WARREN REPORT
(Part Four)

(Wed., 10-11 p.m., CBS-TV)

CBS News, which endorsed the findings of the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy for the first three hours of this special, ended its marathon by sharply criticizing certain practices of the Commission, then reiterating its wholehearted support. This is a paradoxical position. For it is these very investigative practices that evoked the criticism which laid the foundation for the widespread doubt and suspicion of the findings, yet CBS overcomes even its own criticisms with far greater mental gymnastics than can much of the American people.

Probably the main fault with this unprecedented longie was exactly that—its length. CBS failed to bring up much in the way of so-called "new" evidence, and if this was destined to be the season for pro-Warren, anti-Jim Garrison spex, they should have confined it to an hour or at most two. Most perplexing issue was raised by the networks—why did they feel such spex necessary? What was aired both on CBS and NBC was principally a rehash of known material, and a parade of witnesses supporting the report, with many accusing Garrison of everything but the assassination. By no yardstick can either network's spec be called objective reporting, and therein lie their principal defects.

Walter Cronkite summed up the CBS longie by saying the Warren report is the easiest to believe, while sorrowfully concluding, "We have found that there has been a loss of morale, a loss of confidence among the American people toward their own government and the men who serve them, and that is perhaps more wounding than the assassination itself." Regretfully, this is true, but Cronkite could have gone into the reason for this unhappy state of affairs. Why should a people who formerly had utmost confidence in their government officials now harbor such distrust?

It could be that the suspicions were created to a great extent by government officials themselves when they arbitrarily decided to conceal from the people evidence in the Kennedy assassination for many years. This is not the action expected from a government in a free society. CBS should not have glossed over this point.

And it could also be because the roles of the FBI, Secret Service and CIA—all governmental agencies—in this entire tragic affair, and the association, if any, of the FBI and CIA with Lee Harvey Oswald are open to considerable question. A free people never doubts government when it feels there has been a leveling and airing of all the facts, but there is considerable sentiment that much has been kept from the people in this situation.

As Cronkite pointed out, a Gallup Poll shows six of every 10 Americans distrust the report, and by a large margin more people buy copies of books attacking the report than those who bought the report. John McCloy, one of the Warren commissioners who was on to defend the report, remarked that perhaps "there's a general distrust of government and government agencies." If there is, only Washington is to blame.

Cronkite's most damning criticism of the report came when he concluded that the Commission "seriously compromised itself by allowing the Secret Service, the FBI and the CIA to investigate questions involving their own actions." Edward Jay Epstein, who wrote "Inquest," which dealt with Commission methods, said when the Warrenites heard of rumors connecting Oswald with the FBI, they had the FBI investigate themselves, and clear themselves. Yet the name, phone, address and license number of an FBI agent in Dallas was in Oswald's notebook.

Similarly, the CIA cleared itself of a tie with Oswald, a curious investigative procedure, yet the Commission thus concluded Oswald had no relationship whatsoever with any agency of the government. Cronkite pointed out the Commission was empowered to conduct its own independent investigation, yet allowed the FBI and CIA to investigate themselves "and so cast a permanent shadow on the answer."

Again, more questions were raised than were answered. A femme said she saw not one, but two killers, yet she was never called by the Commission, nor did it investigate her story. Pix and X-rays of JFK's body might settle the entire question of conspiracy, yet not one member of the Commission ever sought these documents, pointed out Mark Lane.

Carelessness and indifference by the FBI and Secret Service to a key piece of evidence at Parkland Memorial Hospital was reported by its own security officer. McCloy said if he had it to do again, he would have insisted on seeing the JFK X-rays and pix, admitted the Commission was overly sensitive about the Kennedy family's feelings.

Arlen Specter, a Warren investigator, defended the report's conclusions strongly, as did McCloy. Oswald's mother reiterated her belief that her son was linked with U.S. intelligence agencies, and Cronkite conceded she may not be wrong, adding this was not a "frivolous" question.

Henry Steele Commager opined there is a "conspiracy psychology" among people today, a view shared by Eric Sevareid, who said there are still people who think Hitler is alive. Sevareid, as did McCloy, defended the integrity of members of the Commission. It is not their integrity, but their wisdom, which is being questioned.

Daku.